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SUBJECT: GUSH KATIF VISA APPLICANTS EXPECT PROTESTS AGAINST PM'S DISENGAGEMENT PLAN, RESISTANCE IN THE "UNLIKELY" EVENT OF AN EVACUATION

1. Summary. In February, Conoff interviewed three visa applicants from the Gush Katif settlement bloc who shared their views on PM Sharon's disengagement plan. The settlers said they expected Gush Katif residents to oppose the PM's plan through both legal and political channels. One applicant, a 19 year-old woman, reported a prevailing inclination among Gush Katif settlers to resist any government evacuation of the settlement, while the other two applicants, a middle aged couple, asserted that they would personally abide by a government order to vacate Gush Katif. The 19 year-old woman related that the consensus in Gush Katif is that no government will ever remove the Gaza settlements. End Summary.

2. The first two applicants, a middle-aged couple originally from South Africa who associate with the National Religious Party, moved to Gush Katif in 1977 because, in their words, they felt "Jews should live everywhere in Eretz Yisrael" and they "wanted to build something new." They also mentioned that the government's financial incentives at the time encouraged them to move. The couple stated that they would certainly abide by any government order to vacate Gush Katif. They said, however, that they would use all legal means at their disposal to protest the Prime Minister's initiative. They opined that clearing Gaza of settlements would not improve Israel's security because of what they termed, "a worldwide Muslim problem" regarding terrorism.

3. The third applicant, a 19-year old woman born and raised in Gush Katif who also associates with the National Religious Party, reported that the consensus in Gush Katif is that no government will ever remove the Gaza settlements. According to her, the settlers claim the government has been making idle threats to remove them from Gush Katif since 1978. Her parents moved to Gush Katif for religious and nationalist reasons in 1977, believing that Gaza is part of "The Greater Land of Israel" and therefore belongs to them. They own greenhouses in Gush Katif and make their living in agriculture.

4. The applicant stated that the prevailing view in Gush Katif is that in the current environment, the settlers should oppose the PM's plan through political pressure to show the government that the Gaza settlers will not submit easily to an evacuation. She stated that if the government does move to evacuate Gush Katif, an event the settlers deem extremely unlikely, they expect to practice the type of resistance used at Yamit in the Sinai in 1982. According to her, the Gush Katif settlers believe that if they make it difficult for the government to evacuate their settlement, then the government would be loath to remove other settlements. She reported that in the unlikely event of an evacuation, her parents would expect financial compensation from the government, as their livelihood depends entirely on their greenhouses in the settlement. As for herself, she expects that the PM's disengagement plan will ultimately be inconsequential and that she will settle in Gush Katif when she marries to raise her own children there.

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